



The Montgomery County RECYCLETTER

September/October 2001

Number 59

Montgomery County Agricultural Fair

The 2001 Montgomery County Agricultural Fair is over, and by all accounts our participation in it was an outstanding success. This was the first year we were able to fully staff our site with only volunteers, and that in itself is a major accomplishment. Our volunteers came out in excessive heat, drizzling rain, and even a torrential downpour. But our Recyclemobile provides shade and protection from sun and rain, so we stayed cool and dry.

The jury is still out on our location. We were stationed at the very end of the carnival area, far away from the businesses and agencies similar to us, but we were not overlooked by fairgoers. People coming to and leaving the parking lots walked by us, and many of them stopped. Some stopped for free gifts; some stopped for information; some people stopped only to tell us how much they recycle; and some stopped to tell us how much they appreciate all that we do. A few people presented their problems and looked for advice. Nobody complained, except about the weather. All the volunteers could share in a feeling of pride at being as-

sociated with the Division of Solid Waste Services—one government agency that really “bends over backwards” for county residents.

We placed three banners around the perimeter of the fairgrounds to advertise that we were providing recycling at the fair. We placed 140 blue bins with signs illustrated to show that we wanted cans and bottles, but no trash in the blue bins. We periodically monitored and cleaned out contaminants so passersby would see only recyclables and not mistakenly use the blue bin for trash. We kept the bins close to trash containers so a conscious decision could be made about any item being discarded. We erected a “Cardboard Corral,” which held each day’s collection of cardboard for the fairgoers to see. We appreciate the many vendors and people on the fairgrounds cleaning crew who brought us cardboard regularly. Five church-run kitchens placed their cardboard and cans out for us to collect.

The weights recorded for 9 days at the fair this year are quite impressive. Mixed paper weighed in at 4,460 pounds. Commingled cans and bottles weighed in at

6,040 lbs. The commingled collection proved to be over twice the weight of our collection in 2000, and considering how little empty cans and bottles weigh, the volume of this collection must have been huge.

Volunteer assistance was crucial in maintaining and monitoring blue bins and collecting cardboard. A list of the volunteers to whom we owe deep and sincere thanks follows this article. However, the following staff members of Solid Waste should be acknowledged for their participation: Joe O’Donnell, Susanne Brunhart Wiggins, Mickey O’Bradovich, Richard Buss, Richard Safreed, Dan McHugh, Randy Hill, Lester DeMotte and our own Claire Agolia. Thanks must also go out to Joanne Leatherman, Director of the Montgomery County Fairgrounds.

Often a funny story comes out of our participation at the fair. This year there’s this one. A very nice woman came by our site, and I noticed she was carrying a bag of carrots. She asked where the animals were and was told. I mentioned the bag of carrots and asked if she was planning to feed the rabbits

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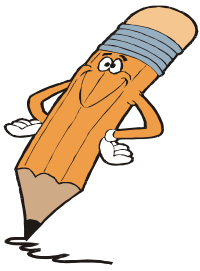
Behind the Scenes - Fall 2001

Curious about what happens to your recyclables? Ever wondered about the inner workings of the Solid Waste Transfer Station, the County Composting Facility, or the Resource Recovery Facility? And what’s this about a landfill? Didn’t the County stop using it a few years ago? The answers to these and many other solid waste and recycling questions await the participants of our free 6-week “Behind the Scenes” course.

“Behind the Scenes” is open to anyone interested in learning about the day-to-day operations of the Division of Solid Waste Services. The course will be held on Thursday evenings at the Solid Waste Transfer Station from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. beginning October 4, 2001. (Feel free to bring your dinner!) Classroom presentations and discus-

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A Note to You



Sometimes it seems that we take a step or two forward only to slide back a bit. Take, for example, a popular chain of coffee shops from Washington State. These folks now bag their coffee grounds and make them available to the public for use in composting. This is very progressive. The grounds, although brown in color, act as a nitrogen-rich “green” in a compost pile. The coffee shops are taking a waste product and giving it free to those who can use it. Certainly it is easier to throw the coffee grounds into the trash. But that is not this company’s style. This same company also has a new commercial for its bottled coffee drink. The commercial begins with a recycling truck arriving at a stop. A young woman is sitting on her front porch drinking the bottled drink. The next scene includes the sound of bottles being poured into the truck. The length of time devoted to the sound of empty glass bottles clinking together sends two messages: This woman drinks a lot of the bottled coffee, and, which is more impressive to me, she recycles all her bottles. Recycling is presented as the norm, rather than the exception.

Then there is the new packaging being promoted by a major seafood-processing company and by some giant manufacturers of dog food and cat food. These are disposable pouches for tuna fish and pet food. Tear them open, empty the contents, and throw away the bags. Advertising suggests that the tuna fish is better looking than what comes out of a can. And yes, that may be possible since the can shapes the fish into semicircular pieces. Dogs and cats, however, don’t care what their food looks like, so it is the convenience of the bag that is promoted. Just how much time is saved by not having to open a can with a can opener and then to rinse and dispose of it with commingled recycling? Not much, I’m afraid. But my complaint here is that a perfectly suitable container, which can be endlessly recycled, is being replaced by a throwaway pouch for the sake of half a minute’s time. Will the pouches catch on? I hope not. I hope that people will see that this is just another gimmick, an attempt to save a bit of time at the expense of the environment.

In Montgomery County, even pop-top lids on cans are recycled after going into the trash, then into the incinerator. A magnet removes steel from the ash and then the steel is recycled. Remember: Loose lids can jam the sorting machine at the recycling center. And speaking of expense, one pays dearly for the convenience of these pouches. Small packaged quantities have always cost more than larger quantities. But the tuna fish in the pouches, for example, is more expensive for half the quantity in the smallest can of tuna fish.

Whenever we enter a store, we are faced with many choices. Environmental shopping is a tricky subject to be sure. Too often the products made from recycled materials are more expensive than those made from virgin resources. Few of us can afford to follow our consciences and buy recycled items when they are not competitively priced. Two of our major local grocery store chains do not even carry toilet paper made from recycled material. And if anything should be made from recycled paper, it is certainly toilet paper! We can “vote” with our pocketbooks and send messages to these stores through our buying habits. Better yet, we can inform the management of stores where we shop about the products of which we approve and of those we don’t.

Even those of us spending more time than we need to, opening cans the old fashioned way, can find the time to write letters, e-mail, and/or speak to the managers of manufacturing companies and sales corporations. Disposable is not always better, cleaner, or timesaving. Sometimes disposable is just plain wasteful. The theory goes that the more we buy recycled products and recyclable containers, the sooner the market will change and the price of those products will come down. The attitudes of the 1950’s are 50 years old and out-of-date. Recycling is no longer a fad of the 1990’s. It is the reality of today and the direction for tomorrow.

Compost Happens

The season will soon be changing. Leaves will turn brown and start falling and covering your lawn. If you don’t pick them up they could overwhelm and kill your grass. If you can cut them up with a mulching mower and let them decompose on the lawn, you can solve your disposal problem that way. But if you decide to collect them, there are two good options available to you. Montgomery County will pick up your leaves if placed in a trashcan with a bright green “Yard Trim” sticker on it. Face the sticker toward the road so the collections truck driver can see it and know that it is not trash. The recycling truck and the yard trim truck come on the same day, and that day may also be your trash collection day. So it is very important to label cans used for yard trim to differentiate them from the same or similar cans used for trash. You may also use large paper bags available in hardware and grocery stores. Please do not use plastic bags for yard trim. Paper bags are shredded along with the contents and they quickly decompose with grass and leaves. Plastic contaminates the compost which the county makes from yard trim. The county will shred the autumn leaves and add them to the compost already in production at our facility in Dickerson. When you buy Leafgro, you may actually be buying back some of the material you donated to the composting program. Leafgro is a product of outstanding quality, and is sold locally at hardware stores and nurseries at competitive prices.

If you are especially industrious, a gardener, or just plain frugal, you can cut out the middleman and make your own compost. Composting at home is easy. Anyone can do it, even in a small space or with a small yard. All we do when we compost is give nature a hand with a natural process that would happen anyway in an undisturbed environment. We can speed up this process through gathering, shredding, watering and turning organic matter in the compost pile.

Gathering leaves concentrates them into a pile that might not occur naturally, but will facilitate decomposition. Fallen leaves are a carbon-rich source of organic matter, which

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County Fair

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(knowing full well that most rabbit keepers do not give carrots to rabbits—in spite of what Bugs Bunny may eat). Her response was, “No, these are for the giraffes.” You can imagine her disappointment . . .

Thank You Fair Volunteers: Bob and Suzanne Browning helped set out blue bins and hang our banners on opening day. Heidi Johnson, Jerri Lipscomb, Steve Albright, Steve Libbey, Liz Bullock, Kristie Mulligan Welch, James Mulligan Welch, John Lindt, Bob Mabie, Joe Connor, Hubbard Hoyt, Kelly Shinko, Jennifer Quinn, and Eugenia Isbell all helped on the first 4 days, when rain fell frequently and sometimes overwhelmingly. Volunteers Carole Sippel, Phil Browne, John Ferguson, and John and Andy Kough were prepared to come and willing to work in the extreme weather, but we spared them attending and closed up shop. No written words can express the depth of appreciation we feel toward these loyal volunteers.

Tuesday was the first nice day we had. Michele Borodinsky, Carol Uhlendorf, Sylvia Eidlin, Janine Farhat, Eleanor Jones, Peggy and Brent Baugher, and Nancy Burkhart inadvertently chose the best day of the week to help. Bernadine and Joe Dadey, Andres Zavala, Hilary Matthews, Palani Sakthival, Jeanne Cook, Marge Holmes, Branka Kienstra, Kayla Richmond, Donna Myers, Joe Howard, Esther and Morton Foxe, Diane Reinke, Daniel Vlacich, Pat and John Purcell, and Bill Wyeth finished out the week for us.

We also appreciate the efforts of W/E volunteers Carlos and Edison Propano, Hillary and Zachary Russ, and our old friend Christine Feintheil.

Many of these volunteers helped at more than one shift on more than one day. Special thanks to Liz Bullock, Hubbard Hoyt, Kelly Shinko and Jennifer Quinn, each of whom assisted on four separate occasions. Also helping on 4 different days and times was Ralph Holtz, who once again receives our “Gold Bin” award for the most hours (27) of any volunteer spent at the fair. And a special award, which we’ll call the “Golden Umbrella” award, goes to Esther and Morton Foxe, who came in the pouring rain, searched for us in vain, and then graciously offered to come back another day.

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS

The MR/C Volunteer Program appreciates the many hours of help it receives. July and August activities included these events:

July’s HHW collection at the Transfer Station was assisted by Carol Simon, Janice Browne, Levin Browne, Bob Mabie and Joe Connor.

Our compost demonstration site at the Transfer Station received some much needed maintenance by Melody Collins.

Office work was performed by Jamar Coleman, Shawn Basak, Melody Collins, and Connor Rosebraugh.

Tony Cammarota acted as tour guide for eight group visits to the Recycling Center.

The Montgomery County Farm Tour stop at Linden Farm in Dickerson was staffed by Liz Bullock.

August’s HHW collection at the Transfer Station was assisted by Denice Etheridge, Jamaal Williams, Jerri Lipscomb, Janice Browne, Levin Browne, Allen Browne, Bob Mabie, and Joe Connor.

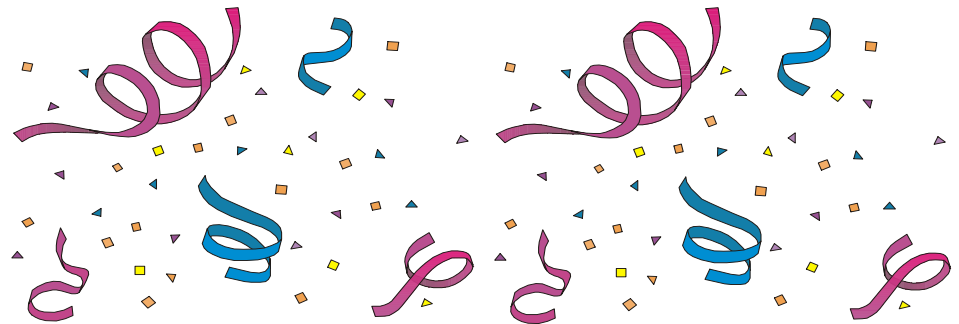
Bernadine Dadey, Tony Cammarota and Jeanine Trudeau have been pioneering community outreach in their neighborhoods, by meeting new neighbors and providing them with information and literature about the county’s recycling services.

HHW in Silver Spring was assisted by Carole Sippel, Dick Meyer, Faith Lapidus and Laura Weiner.

Jamar Coleman and Catherine Schools provided numerous hours of office assistance.

As always, thanks to Diane Reinke for her editing talents.

Our very sincere thanks to all of these fine volunteers.



Why Buy Recycled?

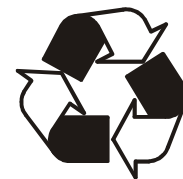
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Buying recycled material creates a demand for recycled products. While some goods have traditionally been made with recycled content (such as steel and boxboard), many more products can be made with recycled content. In order to get manufacturers to produce more recycled products at competitive prices, demand needs to be created for these goods.

Close the recycling loop! It is not enough to collect recyclable materials. You

must purchase recycled products. Something is not completely recycled until it is made into a new product and that new product is purchased and used.

—Sara Zavala



Recycling References

MONTGOMERY COUNTY SOLID WASTE TRANSFER STATION

16101 Frederick Rd., Derwood 301-840-2370
(Route 355 & Shady Grove Rd.)

PUBLIC UNLOADING FACILITY

Monday - Friday, 7:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m.;
Saturday, 7:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.; Sunday, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Truck Hours, Monday - Saturday, 7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

(Use Shady Grove Truck Entrance if you are dropping off materials in a truck.)

Accepts mixed glass bottles and jars, cans, and all plastic bottles with necks, all paper, all cardboard, antifreeze, waste oil, auto batteries, oil (5gallon limit per trip), tires (maximum of 4 per trip), and yard trim.

DON'T DUMP, DONATE!

At Public Unloading Facility

Accepts unused or used building materials in usable condition, such as: lumber, cinderblocks, wood, lights, flooring, plumbing fixtures, cabinets, toilets, tubs, doors - everything, including the kitchen sink.

CLOTHING & TEXTILE RECYCLING

At Public Unloading Facility

Accepts clothes, drapes, shoes, towels, sheets, belts, handbags, and material larger than 15" x 15" in area. Clothing & textiles must be clean, dry and in plastic bags.

SCRAP METAL/LARGE APPLIANCES RECYCLING

At Public Unloading Facility

Accepts refrigerators, freezers, hot water heaters, window air conditioning units, dehumidifiers, and all items that are mostly metal.

COMPUTERS

At Public Unloading Facility

Accepts monitors, P/C's, key boards, printers and most other computer equipment.

FREE MULCH

At Public Unloading Facility

Entrance off Route 355

Mulch produced from ground up brush is available at no charge. Load all you want yourself.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE

All sites operate from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Sunday, September 23, 2001	Germantown, Upcounty Regional Services Center
Sunday, October 7, 2001	Shady Grove Transfer Station
Saturday, October 20, 2001	Briggs Chaney Park & Ride Lot
Sunday, November 4 2001	Shady Grove Transfer Station

Accepts insecticides, pesticides, fertilizers, paint thinners and solvents, pool chemicals, fuels, oil, photographic chemicals, oil-based paints, button and rechargeable batteries, fluorescent bulbs (limit of 12 bulbs).

FURNITURE

The Housing Opportunities Commission will pick up any reusable furniture item in good condition, such as tables, chairs, sofas, beds, mattresses, and box springs. To arrange for pick up, please call 301-495-0983.

SPECIAL DROP-OFFS

ROCKVILLE AREA

Montgomery Scrap Corporation 301-424-3000

15000 Southlawn Lane

Buys back aluminum cans, scrap metal, other metals, and accepts appliances, including refrigerators. (With freon removed)

Monday - Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Saturday, 7:00 a.m. to noon.

Georgetown Paper Stock of Rockville

301-762-6990

14818 Southlawn Lane

Monday - Friday, 6:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Buys back aluminum cans in 10 lb. loads, white office paper and computer paper in 100 lb. loads (no newspaper) and accepts corrugated cardboard, mixed paper and paperboard.

SILVER SPRING AREA

Southeast Recycling Corp.

301-589-4002

9001 Brookville Road

Accepts newspapers, magazines and catalogs, telephone books, corrugated cardboard and cereal boxes.

GAITHERSBURG AREA

The City of Gaithersburg provides mixed paper and corrugated cardboard recycling for its residents. Call the Public Works Department at 301-258-6370 for more information.

Office Paper Systems

301-948-6301

7650 Airpark Road

Drop-off bin available 24 hours.

Accepts all types of paper ("any thing that tears").

WHITE OAK AREA

White Oak Boy Scout Troop 1086

301-622-1273

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, 11612 New Hampshire Avenue

Fourth Saturday of the month, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. *Accepts newspaper.*

COLLEGE PARK AREA

University of Maryland Recycling Center

301-314-8345

Lot 4A on Paint Branch Drive (near the intersection of Metzger Rd. and University Blvd.) Open 24 hours a day.

Accepts white, colored, office and computer paper, corrugated and glossy cardboard, magazines, glass, aluminum cans, newspaper, clothing, telephone books, scrap metal, textbooks, aluminum foil, catalogs, and steel cans.

DAMASCUS AREA

St. Paul's Catholic Church

301-253-2027

9240 Damascus Road, Open 24 hours

Accepts newspaper in bin behind church.

POOLESVILLE AREA

Highway Services Depot, Jerusalem Road

240-777-7623

Saturday, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Accepts used motor oil and antifreeze (up to 5 gallons of each).

